

Lessons learned from the first cycle of the HLPF & Messages for the 2019 HLPF Summit, 18.7. 2019

Mayor Jan Vapaavuori's remarks

1. Has the HLPF delivered effectively on its role to follow-up and review the 2030 Agenda? What are the challenges and opportunities for the HLPF to deliver on its functions? (2 min)

The HLPF has succeeded in progressing towards a global movement. However, in order to achieve the ambitious goals set for Agenda 2030 and to create a truly comprehensive outlook, relevant stakeholders – more specifically those who carry the responsibility for local implementation – should be part of the HLPF process in a more integral way.

Even though Agenda 2030 is a state-level commitment, it is a fact that cities carry the main responsibility of the implementation. Ongoing rapid urbanization will only highlight this in the future. The legitimization of the implementation of Agenda 2030 requires that it is validated by people. Then cities, with their practical and down-to-earth relationship with people, by definition should have a more profound role in the HLPF cycle.

Theoretically you could rely on the nation-states' capacity to bring cities on board to the process. But by paying respect on the cities' position in the global development framework you achieve better results. Many cities are willing and able to commit to the Agenda 2030 – to a degree even more than some states – and this brings undeniable value to the implementation of the global goals.

This commitment is the most important global commitment in the world. The urgency of the success of the Sustainable Development Goals can only be achieved if we make this process truly inclusive.

2. Which aspects of the Forum could be strengthened to ensure effective and inclusive follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and how can this be done? (3 min)

Two weeks ago the City of Helsinki submitted a Voluntary Local Review of the SDG's as the second city in the world after the City of New York. No-one required this from us. We – and now other cities around the world – are committing to the delivery of the VLR's because of our willingness to forward the successful implementation of the Agenda 2030. We are witnessing a global movement of VLR cities from Buenos Aires to Helsinki and Bristol.

The work cities are doing has much practical value. However, in the context of global collaboration the symbolic position of this work should be acknowledged and utilized. Even though the ultimate goal is to take practical steps towards the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, a formal position would ensure a more profound collaboration with the nation-states and a seat at the table where follow-up and review are executed.

Cities share the sense of urgency expressed by the United Nations Secretary General. In some countries cities are the drivers of the implementation of the SDG's. To support these cities' ability to contribute – and to utilize all cities' capabilities - would be a profound step towards a more inclusive and holistic execution of Agenda 2030.

In accordance to our theme this year - *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality* – I propose that the second cycle of the HLPF should provide a platform for a wider ecosystem reflection to ensure a holistic and tangible view on the successes and the output of the local level.